


4-State Customer Barcode Fact Sheet

What Is The 4-state Customer Barcode?

The 4-State Customer barcode is the next generation of USPS barcode technology used to sort and track letters and flats. The Postal Service is promoting the use of this new barcode because it will make mailing more efficient for the mailer and for USPS by allowing expanded tracking capability and greater visibility into the mailstream.

The 4-State barcode technology, among other things, combines the capabilities of the POSTNET barcode and the PLANET Code® barcode into one unique barcode.

It is a type of 4-state barcode, which is a height-modulated barcode using four distinct, vertical bar types: .



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How Do Mailers Benefit From Using The 4-state Customer Barcode?

Mailers will get better and more information about their mail and as a result can make better decisions.

The 4-State Customer barcode is the result of Postal Service's effort to develop more advanced coding standards that can significantly increase the amount of information carried, but requiring only minimal increase in space on the mailpiece. The primary benefits of this barcode are:

- Increases mailpiece "real estate" that can be used for marketing messages by combining the capabilities of POSTNET barcode and PLANET Code barcode.
- Provides more overall data capacity and more digits to enable mailers to uniquely identify up to a billion mailpieces.
- Allows for the selection of multiple services through a single barcode.

Furthermore, the 4-State Customer barcode has undergone rigorous testing both in controlled and live production environments.

When Can I Start Using It?

The USPS plans to begin offering a 4-State Customer barcode option as part of the OneCodeCONFIRM and OneCodeACS services for letters in the summer of 2006. At that time, Confirm customers will have the choice

of using either 4-State barcode or PLANET Code to help them track mail.

To facilitate a more manageable implementation, USPS is following a staged deployment of 4-State barcode, which will be made available on flats after evaluating the processes for participating mailers' letter mail. The 4-State Customer barcode option will be available for OneCodeCONFIRM on flats in the fall of 2006.

BMEU staff training is planned for the end of March. BMEU should be ready to accept letters with 4-State barcode this summer. Flats will be accepted in the fall of 2006.

Will I be forced to use it in lieu of POSTNET and PLANET barcodes?

No. The use of 4-State Customer barcode is optional. However, it offers significant advantages over using POSTNET and PLANET barcodes, including less mailpiece "real estate" for barcodes and more overall data capacity.

If you are currently a Confirm subscriber, please contact Confirm Customer Assistance at 800-238-3150 for detailed instructions on how to use your ID and modify your account to accept the 4-State Customer barcode.

Can I Get Automation Discount

Yes, as long as all other automation requirements and Confirm or ACS requirements are met. Getting automation discounts work the same way as with POSTNET. Postage reduction is offered to mailers who barcode their letters and flats and meet addressing, readability, and other requirements for processing on automated equipment.

Where can I place the 4-State Customer barcode and what are the acceptable dimensions?

The 4-State Customer barcode can be placed in the address block. Except for OneCodeACS, MLOCR vendors can also place it in the barcode clear zone in the lower right corner of the envelope.

The 31-digit 4-State Customer barcode (65 bars) is slightly longer than the 11-digit POSTNET (62 bars). The 4-State Customer barcode offers mailers certain flexibility in choosing the height and width of the barcode. Full specifications are available at <http://ribbs.usps.gov/OneCodeSOLUTION/>.

Is my provider capable of printing the 4-State Customer barcode?

To aid in implementing 4-State Customer barcode, a number of tools and resources are being made available via the Rapid Information Bulletin Board System (RIBBS) web site (<http://ribbs.usps.gov/OneCodeSOLUTION/>), such as an online encoder/decoder, encoder software for a range of platforms and 4-State barcode fonts.

Will I have more problems passing MERLIN program requirements?

No. The Postal Service's MERLIN program (Mail Evaluation Readability Lookup Instrument) is a tool that assists with the acceptance of business mail. The 4-State Customer barcode tolerances are similar to POSTNET's, so you should not expect any additional print issues.

Do I need to redo CASS or MASS certification?

CASS enables the Postal Service to evaluate the accuracy of address-matching software programs, and the CASS process is still applicable to mailpieces with the 4-State Customer barcode, so there is no need to redo this certification.

The MASS certification is an extension of CASS and is a requirement that needs to be redone annually. Testing for the new 4-State Customer barcode certification will be available in April 2006.

What Services Are Using The 4-state Customer Barcode?

The 4-State Customer barcode initially will be offered as an option for the OneCodeCONFIRM and OneCodeACS services for letter mail in the summer of 2006. Both Origin and Destination

Confirm service types will be offered, as well as ACS options for automation letters.

Where can I find more information on 4-State Customer barcode?

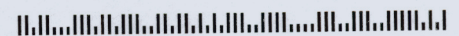
The Rapid Information Bulletin Board System (RIBBS) web site has a dedicated section for OneCodeSOLUTION barcode resources at <http://ribbs.usps.gov/OneCodeSOLUTION/>.

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